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Recommended Citation

University of Montana–Missoula. Office of University Relations, "Montana State hosting UM cross country team" (1971). *University of Montana News Releases, 1928, 1956-present*. 25433.
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MONTANA STATE HOSTING
UM CROSS COUNTRY TEAM

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MISSOULA--

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The well-balanced University of Montana cross country team, that so far this year has won only one meet, has a dual encounter with Montana State Saturday in Bozeman, a town where interest will be running high over a different sort of running game -- one measured in yards instead of miles.

But while gaining five miles in one contest would be unheard of even for the likes of UM's record-breaking halfback Steve Caputo, who in three years of running has gained only one mile and one yard, all seven Montana cross country runners will take the distance in stride this weekend.

They hope to take it in rapid enough strides to defeat Montana State and restore their confidence for next weekend's Big Sky Conference championship race in Pocatello.

Saturday's meet begins at 11 a.m. on the golf course adjoining the MSU campus.

Coach Harley Lewis will leave behind his number one runner, freshman Hans Templeman, who finished third in last weekend's Intermountain meet in Pocatello. Montana finished a disappointing second in that meet where one of the chief competitors was the wind and it was stiff. Templeman is being left behind to insure he is in top shape for the title meet.

"His leg is a little sore," says Lewis, "but he could run. There's no question about that. We're just resting him."

Veteran George Cook, ordinarily considered Montana's top runner, finished 33rd in the Pocatello race. Lewis says it was a combination of the wrong kind of shoes (the course was icy and Cook, along with several of his teammates, wore flat shoes instead of spikes) and too long a layoff. In the 14 days before that meet Cook was laid up for nine days with illness and injury.

Besides Cook, Lewis will take veterans Boyd Collins, Mark Ryan, Wes Priestly, and Mike Prindle and freshmen Doug Darko, Dave Pelletier and Terry Pitts.

Although the Bobcat runners have not been doing well as a team there is among them Jim Robbins, a 4:11 miler from Manhattan, who placed second ahead of Templeman in the Pocatello race.

"Robbins is an excellent runner," Lewis says, "and he has to be favored to win this race."

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